



## The TRAFFIC SIGNAL

As children we learn that red means stop and green means go. Today, traffic signals are as common as the streets we drive on. Rarely considered is the planning and expense which goes into traffic signal control at an intersection.

Traffic signals allow the orderly movement of vehicles and pedestrians through an otherwise challenging intersection. Usually, signals are at intersections of streets with high traffic volumes.

State Law requires that prior to installing a traffic signal an engineering study must be completed. This study should document that the installation of a signal is necessary to improve the over-all operation of the intersection.

The study for installation of traffic signals is based upon the following criteria documented in the national "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices":

- consistently high traffic volume
- an accident rate which may be reduced
- excessive wait time for vehicles or pedestrians to cross an intersection
- restricted visibility
- a high volume of pedestrian traffic

## LEFT TURN ARROWS

Drivers attempting to make a left turn are sometimes frustrated by the inability to turn due to the amount of on-coming traffic. Traffic engineers study these situations to determine if there is a need for a left turn arrow.

Left turn arrows are great if you're the one turning left, however they generally make the wait longer for everyone at the intersection. Traffic engineers must balance between adding a left turn arrow for the minor vehicle movement (left turners) and cause more overall delay for the other more major movements or allow left turners to use available gaps in opposing traffic as well as the yellow phase of the signal to make the left turn. Safety and accident history are always considered in this evaluation.

Not all left turn arrow signals are the same. At some intersections green arrows may operate only at peak hours, while during off-peak hours, all traffic is controlled by the standard green and red lights. Intersections which have consistently high volumes or restricted visibility may only allow you to turn on the green arrow at all times of the day.

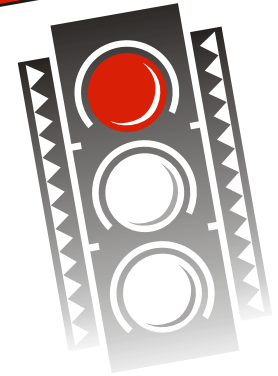
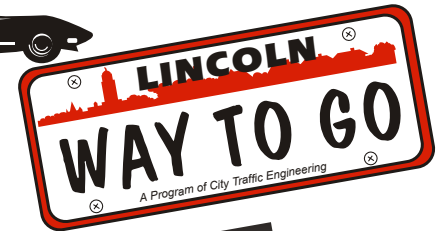
## TRAFFIC SIGNALS AS A TOOL

It is the mission of the Lincoln Public Works and Utilities Department to provide citizens a safe, convenient, accessible and affordable transportation system.

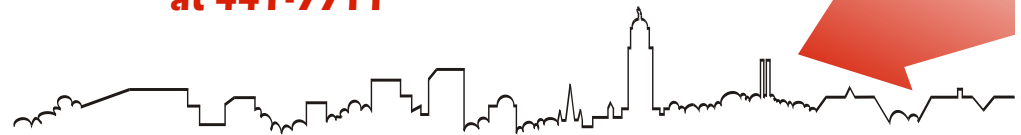
Traffic signals are an important tool in helping traffic move smoothly through Lincoln. Decisions about a signal's optimum timing and operation are unique to each intersection. Most of Lincoln's traffic signals are monitored by a computer and engineers make adjustments to enhance traffic flow.

A traffic signal is not a substitute for an attentive driver. Follow the direction of traffic signals and be alert to other drivers. It's the "Way to Go."

For more information call the  
**Public Works and  
 Utilities Department**  
**Engineering Services Division**  
**at 441-7711**



## At Traffic Signals & Left Turn Arrows



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